

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 06918 131756Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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R 131126Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3382

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6918

CALCUTTA 1152 FOLLOWS. SENT TO NEW DELHI FOR ACTION ON 13 MAY 77.
BEING RPT FOR YOUR ACTION/INFO.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 1152

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, INN NP
SUBJ: THE NAXALITES - TO STAY IN JAIL OR BE RELEASED?

REF: CALCUTTA, 0806, CALCUTTA 1054

SUMMARY: SPOKESMEN FROM ALL ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM
HAVE CALLED FOR THE RELEASE OF NAXALITES HELD UNDER MISA
AND DIR. BUT FEW PEOPLE REALLY SEEM TO WANT TO SEE THEM
LOOSE AGAIN, EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE ABJURED VIOLENCE - AND
ESPECIALLY NOT THOSE WEST BENGAL NAXALS WHO CONTINUE TO
PREACH "REVOLUTIONARY ARMED STRUGGLE". FOR ALL ITS LEGAL
ASPECTS, RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES IS ESSENTIALLY A POLITI-
CAL QUESTION. WE DON'T EXPECT VERY MANY - IF ANY - WILL BE
RELEASED BEFORE THE STATE ELECTIONS IN JUNE AND EVEN AFTER
THAT MOST MAY BE KEPT IN JAIL FOR A WHILE, PERHAPS FOR
YEARS MORE.

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 06918 131756Z

1. WITH THE TERMINATION OF EMERGENCY AND THE UPCOMING STATE
ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS THE DEMAND FOR THE RELEASE OF IMPRISONED
NAXALITES (CPM M-L) HAS BECOME THE RALLYING POINT AMONG THE
FACTIONALIZED NAXALITES. (BY OUR COUNT THERE ARE 14 DIFFER-
ENT FACTIONS COUNTRYWIDE AND 7 IN WEST BENGAL.) CALLS FOR
THE RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES HAVE COME FROM PEOPLE ALL
ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, THE CPI, THE CPM, ELEMENTS

OF JANATA AND CONGRESS. BUT ALL FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

2. THE GOWB OFFICIALLY ADMITS TO HOLDING 581 NAXALS UNDER MISA AND AN ADDITIONAL 330 UNDER CRIMINAL CHARGES. THE NAXALITES CLAIM THAT THE GOWB IS HOLDING MORE THAN 4,500 OF THEIR MEMBERS UNDER VARIOUS CHARGES - A TOTAL WHICH A SENIOR POLICE SOURCE SAYS IS FAIRLY ACCURATE. (THERE ARE A NUMBER OF NAXALITES BEING HELD UNDEE DIR AND OTHERS WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONVICTED OF CRIMES WHO ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE GOWB FIGURE.) THE STATESMAN REPORTED ON MAY 10 THAT THE GOWB HAD WITHDRAWN CHARGES AGAINST ONE GROUP OF 64 LED BY NISHIT BHATTACHARYA WHO WERE ARRESTED IN APRIL OF 1976 BECAUSE "THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO WARRANT A CHARGE SHEET."

3. THIS ISSUE PUTS JANATA IN A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT POSITION. DURING THE LOK SABHA CAMPAIGN JANATA PROMISED THE RELEASE OF ALL IMPRISONED POLITICAL PRISONERS, INCLUDING NAXALITES. BUT NAXALITE EXPECTATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE UPON THE VICTORY OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTED. WHEN SIX TOP NAXALITE LEADERS WERE FLOWN OUT OF DETENTION IN WEST BENGAL TO NEW DELHI ON APRIL 26 FOR WHAT WERE TO BE TALKS REGARDING THEIR RELEASE, THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY PUT IN JAIL AGAIN WITHOUT MEETING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. UNION MINISTER CHARAN SINGH IN A RECENT STATEMENT SAID THAT UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES WOULD BE GRANTED ONLY IF THEY RENOUNCE VIOLENCE. THIS CONDITION HAS DIVIDED THE NAXALITES IN WEST BENGAL FROM THE MAIN BODY LED BY CPI - ML GENERAL SECRETARY SATYANARAIN SINGH. SINGH CLAIMS THAT HE WANTS THE NAXALITES TO GIVE UP VIOLENCE AND TO TAKE PART IN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 06918 131756Z

THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL LIFE BY CONTESTING IN THE FORTHGGMING ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS; SINGH ALSO WANTS AN ADJUSTMENT OF SEATS WITH JANATA. BUT THE SEVEN WEST BENGAL NAXALITE FACTIONS SO FAR REFUSE TO GIVE UP (IN THEIR OWN WORDS) "THE PATH OF REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE, REVOLUTIONARY ARMED STRUGGLE AND SEIZURE OF POWER THROUGH PROTRACTED ARMED STRUGGLE."

4. THE CPM IS ALSO PUBLICLY ASKING FOR THE RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES BUT THEIR SUPPORT IS AT MOST LUKEWARM. WEST BENGAL CPM LEADER JYOTI BASU IS SAID TO FEAR THAT IF THE NAXALITES ARE RELEASED BEFORE THE FORTHCOMING ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS THEY MIGHT RESORT TO VIOLENCE AND THIS WOULD REFLECT BADLY ON THE CPM AND THE LEFT ALLIANCE AND BRING BACK MEMORIES OF THE UNION FRONT GOVERNMENT OF 1969-1971. THE CPM ALSO SEEMS CONCERNED THAT IF THE CPI M-L WERE AGAIN TO BECOME LEGITIMATE IT MIGHT ATTRACT SOME OF THE LEFT FRINGES OF THE CPM. BUT SOME SOURCES SAY THE CPM CONSIDERS THE NAXALITES NO LONGER MUCH OF A DANGER, OR AT LEAST A CONTROLLABLE ONE.

5. THE CPI HAS ALSO PUBLICLY EXPRESSED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES, THOUGH THE CPI AND THE CPI M-L ARE BITTER ENEMIES. THE CPI KNOWS THAT THE NAXALITES CONSIDER THEM TRAITORS TO THE COMMUNIST CAUSE AND ALLIES OF THE CONGRESS PARTY. THE RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES AND THEIR ENTRANCE INTO LEGITIMATE POLITICS COULD FURTHER WEAKEN THE POSITION OF THE CPI AMONG THE LEFT PARTIES. BUT SOME SAY THE CPI HOPES THE RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES - AND THE RESULTANT ENSURING VIOLENCE - WOULD CAUSE EMBARRASSMENT TO THE CPM.

6. LOCAL POLICE, SECURITY AGENCIES AND CONGRESS LEADERS ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES WHO THEY BELIEVE HAVE NOT GIVEN UP THEIR IDEAS OF REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE. THE SECURITY SERVICES FEAR THAT THE NAXALITES WILL TAKE REVENGE ON THOSE OFFICERS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THEIR ARREST AND IN THE KILLINGS OF NAXALITES DURING THE 1969-1971 PERIOD. IT IS THE GROUP THAT WAS ARRESTED DURING THE 1969-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 06918 131756Z

1971 PERIOD THAT MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF NAXALITES NOW CONFINED AND WHOM THE SECURITY SERVICES AND CONGRESS LEADERS ARE MOST RELUCTANT TO HAVE RELEASED.

7. THE RELEASE OF THE NAXALITES IS PRIMARILY A POLITICAL QUESTION - THOSE HELD UNDER MISA CAN BE DETAINED INDEFINITELY AND EVEN FOR THOSE UNDER DIR THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF WAYS FOR THE GOB AND THE GOI TO STALL - AND FOR THAT REASON WE DO NOT EXPECT LARGE SCALE RELEASES BEFORE THE JUNE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. OF COURSE, THE STATEMENTS BY WEST BENGAL NAXALITES THAT THEY WILL NOT RENOUNCE VIOLENCE MAKE IT ALL THE EASIER FOR THE AUTHORITIES TO CONTINUE TO HOLD THEM. A FEW NAXALITES MIGHT BE LET OUT AS A TOKEN GESTURE TO THE LEFT BUT MOST WILL STAY IN JAIL FOR AT LEAST A WHILE LONGER IF NOT FOR YEARS TO COME.

KORN

UNQUOTE
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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